new licenses, identify sensitive/trouble-prone areas/polling stations and compulsory identification of voters.

Fatwas issued by religious institutions

2750. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) what procedures are followed by the jurisdictional courts when Fatwas are issued by the Islamic institutions or even local panchayats in criminal cases at variance with the existing criminal laws;

(b) whether there are any specific guidelines or instructions relating to dealing with such cases or it is left to the discretion of the local courts; and

(c) the steps Government propose to ensure that ends of justice are adequately met particularly in respect of the victims of major crimes perpetrated on them?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) The procedure to be followed by courts in the criminal cases are set out in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and Fatwas issued by the Islamic institutions are not having any legal backing and they are not valid in the eye of law.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) To meet the ends of justice to the victims, the law enforcing agencies of the Government takes the recourse as mandated under the law.

Administration of Criminal Justice

2751. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rate of disposal of criminal cases under Indian Penal Code specially local laws over the last several years has highly dismal;

(b) the steps Government have taken for expeditious disposal of the criminal cases during the last three years; and

(c) whether Government have taken any decision on the recommendation of Malimath Committee regarding reduction of long vacations in the High Courts and Supreme Court, which might go a long way on the early disposal of the pending cases both in High Courts and Supreme Court, and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) and (b) The disposal rate not being adequate for the pendency, the Government has initiated a number of measures which include, timely filling the vacancies of judges, increasing the judge strength, grouping of cases etc. The Eleventh Finance Commission recommended a scheme for creation of 1734 Fast Track Courts at a cost of Rs. 502.90 crore. 1562 FTCs were functional, and they have disposed of 7.94 lakh cases so far, out of 15.28 lakh cases transferred to them. Thus disposing of more than 50% of cases assigned to them. Further, they have disposed of 2.81 lakh sessions cases, out of 4.41 lakh cases transferred to them. The Government has extended the term of existing 1562 Fast Track Courts for another five years *i.e.* upto 31.3.2010 for clearing huge pendency of cases at District level.

(c) No, Sir.

Pending cases

2752. SHRI N.R. GOVINDRAJAR: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of civil, criminal and service matter cases are pending with the Supreme Court and various High Courts for more than five years;

(b) if so, the details thereof separately, category-wise, court-wise; and

(c) the effective steps proposed to be taken by Government for the speedy disposal of the long pending cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) and (b) A Statement is enclosed (*See* below).

(c) In order to reduce pendency of cases Government has initiated a number of measures which include, timely filling the vacancies of